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THE INFANTRY SCHOOL  
FOURTH SECTION  
COMMITTEE "H"  
FORT BENNING, GEORGIA

COMPANY OFFICERS' COURSE  
1925-1926

OPERATIONS OF THE 61st INFANTRY, 5th DIVISION (U.S.) DURING  
THE THIRD PHASE OF THE MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE

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Captain John R. Hodge, Infantry.

## INDEX

	page
Index . . . . .	I
Bibliography . . . . .	II
Additional sources of information . . . . .	III
Marginal abbreviations . . . . .	IV
Introduction . . . . .	1
The situation of November 1, 1918 . . . . .	4
Detailed plans and operations . . . . .	6
Functioning of special units within and attached to the regiment . . . . .	25
Analysis and criticism . . . . .	27
Lessons . . . . .	32

## MAPS

General map . . . . .	35
Map showing operations west of the Meuse . . . . .	36
Map showing operations east of the Meuse . . . . .	37

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## ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### A. INDIVIDUALS

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McClure, Lowe A., Colonel	Official Report, covering operations of 3d Battalion, 61st Inf., Nov. 1-11, 1918. (Was Lt. Colonel 61st Inf. commanding 3d Battalion, 61st Infantry, Nov. 1-11, 1918).
Morris, Wm., Master Sergeant	Verbal Statement (was 1st Sergeant, M.G. Company, 61st Infantry, Nov. 1-11, 1918).
Olmstead, Merrit E., Captain	Verbal Statement. (Was Captain, 61st Infantry, and commanded 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry, November 1-11, 1918).
The Author	Personal Experiences. (Was Captain, 61st Infantry, and Operations Officer of the Regiment, November 1-11, 1918.)

### B. RECORDS

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Operations of the Third Army Corps on the West Bank of the Meuse. (Part II, Staff Ride, General Staff College, A.E.F.)

# MARGINAL ABBREVIATIONS USED

A Report of E. C. Allworth, Captain, 60th Infantry

E "Epitome of Events" to accompany report of 5th Division

FO 3-C \*Field Order #\_\_\_\_, Third Army Corps

FO 5-D \*Field Order #\_\_\_\_, 5th Division

FO 9-B \*Field Order #\_\_\_\_, 9th Brigade

RE \*Report of General H.E. Eli.

\*Note: These references found in "Monograph 5th Division".

  

H-5 "The Official History of the 5th Division"

H-61 "A History of the 61st Infantry"

Lu "Ludendorff's Own Story", Vol. II.

M Verbal Statement of Master Sergeant Wm. Morris

Mc Report of Colonel Lowe A. McClure

O Verbal Statement of Captain M. E. Olmstead

O-3 "Operations of the Third Army Corps on the West Bank of the Meuse"

P "Final Report of General John J. Pershing"

PK Personal Knowledge of the Writer

PL "Report of the First Army, A.E.F." by Pershing and Liggett.

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## INTRODUCTION

Much has been written and much more will be written of the action of large units in wars past and in wars still to come, but it is hard to find authentic accounts of action of the smaller units, such as companies, battalions and regiments, which go to make up the corps and armies of history. Nevertheless, it is the successes or failures of these small units that make the successes or failures of the armies. The small units may be likened to the materials and tools used by the skilled artisan in building a masterpiece; if they are not of proper quality, the masterpiece is doomed to failure.

In studying any event of history, military or civil, the student must go back of the event at hand in order that he may know the governing background, and in the particular case at hand he will be better able to grasp fully the story of action of the regiment being studied after a short survey of pertinent points in its history.

The 61st United States Infantry was a regular army regiment, born on the scene of Pickett's charge at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on June 10, 1917, by transfer of men and officers from the 7th Infantry. (1) There were few of the officers, and the few hundred men were almost entirely recruits. (2)

This was at a time when the War Department apparently had hopes that Bryan's prophecy of a "million men to arms overnight" would come true, (3) but by November, 1917, there were only about eighteen hundred of the thirty-seven hundred necessary for the full quota, and they were recruits. (3)

(4)PK The regiment was filled in late January, 1918, by the addition of two thousand drafted men from eastern depots, the military equipment and training of whom consisted of their uniforms and incomplete packs. (4) They were mostly from the slums and industrial districts of large eastern cities, and comparatively few were native Americans of native parentage, it requiring in many instances two or three interpreters to talk to a man. (5)

(6)PK The officers of this regiment below field grades were almost entirely from the first and second officers training camps, with the majority from the second camp. (6)

(7)PK The training of the regiment did not really begin in earnest until February, 1918. (7) It readily follows that such a regiment, even though in name Regular Army, would not be up to the standard of a great many national army or national guard regiments.

(8)PK H-5 1-169 The 61st Infantry was assigned to the 9th Brigade of the 5th Division, and its battle training prior to the last phase of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, consisted of: two tours of approximately one month each in the quiet sectors along the Alsace-Lorraine front; four days in the St. Mihiel action; and from October 12th to the 18th in the front lines in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. (8) Casualties in the quiet fronts and St. Mihiel were negligible, but the results of the action in the Argonne should be mentioned more fully. Battle casualties here were forty-seven officers, and nine hundred and seventy-one men, and in addition, during the period October 18th to 26th while the regiment was in 5th Division and Third Corps Reserve, hundreds of men and many officers were evacuated sick, while many other hundreds were treated by the doctors. (9) Colds and threatened pneumonia from exposure,

(9)PK

and diarrhoea and dysentery from bad water and excess of  
canned foods, caused about half as many casualties as did  
(10)PK wounds, and left many others in weakened condition. (10)  
It was during the eight days spent in reserve that the regiment  
(11)PK got its rest before the last phase of the Meuse-Argonne Of-  
fensive. (11) Rest, in cold rainy weather without sufficient  
shelter, sleeping on wet ground, in woods and old trenches;  
rest, harassed by long range artillery and aerial bombing;  
rest, about the sole virtue of which was plenty of hot food.  
(12)PK But in spite of drawbacks, morale improved some. (12)

Near noon of October 26th approximately six hundred re-  
(13)PK placements arrived, after an all morning hike. (13) The  
writer personally met and assigned these replacements to units  
of the regiment. No records other than a list of names ac-  
companied these men, and the state of their training could  
(14)PK be determined only by questioning them. (14) Few of them had  
been in the service over three months, those were the veterans,  
and many of them said they had first gone to camps only six  
(15)PK weeks before that time. (15) Most of the men said that they  
had never fired a service rifle. Many did not have bayonets.  
(16)PK (16)

All those who admitted sufficient training and knowledge  
of the use of the rifle were assigned to rifle companies;  
of the balance, twelve went to each combat company as litter  
bearers, twenty-five or thirty to the machine gun company  
train, and about two hundred were attached to the Supply  
(17)PK Company to be used as carriers. (17)

Less than three hours after these men arrived, the regi-  
ment started its move to the front lines where that night,  
October 26th-27th, it was to take over its front line sector  
from which the last offensive on the Boche was to be launched.  
(18)PK (18)



November 1st found the regiment as can be pictured from the foregoing: about two-thirds strength including six hundred green recruits; extremely short of officers, most companies having only one officer and only two companies with the company commander who led them beginning October 12th; men at low physical efficiency; in all but little improved from the last combat except in morale. (19)

(19)PK  
Mc. 2

#### THE SITUATION ON NOVEMBER 1, 1918

The First American Army had been generally on the offensive since September 26, 1918, in its sector north of historic Verdun, between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest, having reached a line generally east and west through Bantheville by October 23d. (20)

(20)P  
16,18,20

No attempt was made at a general offensive after this time, but the time was spent in preparation for the new general attack, which was finally set for November 1st. (21) The Third Corps with the 5th and 90th Divisions in the front line from right to left, held the right of the army sector from the Meuse River to include Bantheville, and on the right of the 5th Division was the 17th French Corps. (22) The 9th Infantry Brigade was next to the 90th Division with the 60th Infantry on the right and 61st on the left, with boundaries as shown by the map. (23)

(22)H-5  
179

(23)FO 63,  
5-D H-61  
P 15  
Ch 4  
FO 30, 9-B

The 61st held Aincreville with the right of its front line extending to opposite Clery-le-Grand along the Andon River facing the enemy in his outpost positions of the Freya Stellung along the Bannicourt Heights. (24)

(24)PK  
H-5 181

The 1st Battalion had been turned over to the 90th Division for use as needed. (25) The 3d Battalion held the front line and the 2d Battalion was in support in vicinity of

(25)PK  
FO 40,  
3-C  
E

## DETAILED PLANS AND OPERATIONS

(34)PK On October 31, 1918, D-Day was announced as November 1st, and H-Hour was announced as 5:30 A.M. (34) The 61st Infantry was charged with the specific task of taking the Bois-de-Babimont, and clearing the ridge beyond to the 90th Division's sector, starting the advance at H-plus-four-hours. (35)

(35)FO 30  
9 B

Accordingly, at 9:30 A.M. of the 1st of November, Company "I", with a strength of less than one hundred men, commanded by Captain R. S. Fisher, and one platoon of Company "D", 14th Machine Gun Battalion, advanced on Bois-de-Babimont from a line just north of Aincreville, where they had gone in position the night before. (36)

(36)PK  
Mc. H-5  
191

Advancing across the valley between Aincreville and Bois-de-Babimont, they met a heavy resistance of rifle and machine gun fire, both from along the unimproved road to the north, and from the woods itself. By a flanking movement on the road, Captain Fisher cleaned out the force there, taking fifty prisoners and some machine guns, relieving pressure at that point. (37) Again taking up the advance on Bois-de-Babimont he met and captured without resistance an infantry company of sixty men entrenched about four hundred meters from this wood, but due to very heavy and effective fire from the woods, and from vicinity of Villers on his left, was pinned to the ground in that vicinity, and forced to dig in. (38) His

(37)PK

(38)PK Mc.

(39)H-5  
191

losses were eight killed and twenty wounded. (39) Company "I" was ordered to remain here until the advance of the 90th Division on the left would relieve the flanking fire. (40)

(40)PK

During the action of Company "I" on Babimont, the 60th Infantry entered Clery-le-Grand with little resistance and cleared the western slope of Hill 261, and the 90th Division on the left had cleared the ridge southwest from Andevanne. (41)

(41)H-5  
191  
E 161

(42)PK  
O H-5  
193

The 1st Battalion had operated along the right flank of the 90th Division, and had connected up with flank patrols of the 3d Battalion north of Aincreville. (42) The 2d Battalion had remained in position in support.

(43)PK  
FO 65  
5-D

The attack of the army had been so successful on the first day that the belief began to grow that the Germans were due for a break and plans for pursuit were inaugurated. (43) At the request of the Colonel of the 61st Infantry, General Castner, commanding the 9th Brigade, asked that the 1st Battalion be returned to regimental control as soon as possible, that it might be used when the time for pursuit came, and was promised that action would be taken. (44)

(44)PK  
E 162

On the night of November 1st,-2d, Company "L" joined Company "I" in front of Bois-de-Babimont and supported by Companies "K" and "M" and fire from the attached machine company, they swept the woods clear on the 2d, against a somewhat lessened resistance, and pushed along the western rim of the Punch Bowl. (45)

(45)PK  
H-5, 195  
O-3, 20

However, these companies still got some flanking fire from Hill 243 and the vicinity of Villers-devant-Dun until the 90th Division and 1st Battalion of the 61st (still with the 90th) drove through and cleared the enemy out of that vicinity. (46) The 60th Infantry on the right took Clery-le-Petit, driving two machine gun companies toward Doullcon, and patrols of the 3d Battalion, 61st connected up with the 60th along the southern rim of the Punch Bowl. (47)

(46)PK  
H-5, 195  
O

(47)H-5  
195

Enemy shelling increased during the day, most of it coming from Dun-sur-Meuse and back of Dun-sur-Meuse. Aviators reported that there seemed to be a considerably increased movement of transportation to the rear on the east side of the Meuse, indicating that the enemy was beginning a withdrawal

(48)PK H-5 of materiel. (48) The enemy met by the regiment on this day  
201  
(49)H-5 had been from units, of the 88th German Division. (49)  
346

(50)PK H-5  
195, FO 47  
3-C

Early the morning of November 3d, the 1st Battalion was returned to regimental control and was ordered to clean up the large saucer-like area west of Dun-sur-Meuse, called the Punch Bowl, the entire area of which was now included in the sector of the 61st. (50) This battalion changed direction eastward from its position on the right of the 90th Division, passed through the 3d Battalion, and swept down the eastern slope of the ridge they then occupied. They were met by a withering fire as they struck the lower slope. Artillery in Dun-sur-Meuse; one pounders from Dun-sur-Meuse and Doulcon, machine guns from Doulcon, Fme-de-Jupille, and Fme-de-la-Briere

(51)PK H-5  
195  
0

all opened up. (51) The lines were thrown into momentary confusion, and but for the personal leadership of Captain Meritt E. Olmstead, who was commanding the battalion, might have been stopped completely. He led them on, however, and under

(52)PK

pressure, the resistance lessened. (52) The advance of the 90th silenced the fire from Fme-de-Jupille, the Boche leaving of their own accord, and as the battalion advanced, the enemy

(53)PK H-5  
195

left Fme-de-la-Briere. (53) The Boche in Doulcon, seeing that the Americans were not being stopped, and being fired on by machine guns of the 60th Infantry from the south, realized their precarious position, and got out under cover of the railroad yards, withdrawing to, Dun. Company "C" of the 61st, under command of Lieutenant E. A. Smith, entered and occupied the town of Doulcon about 11:00 A.M., mopping up a few remaining snipers.

(54)PK H-5 (54)  
195 0

(55)PK H-5  
195

In this town there were large military stores including several million feet of lumber, extensive railway yards and much rolling stock, and the souvenir hunters were in their glory. (55) Also, there were many gardens of fresh vegetables, including

flat to the canal to begin work there, wading mud and water up to waist deep, and scratched by thorny brush in going across, the two "I" Companies following closely. (83)

(83)PK  
A 1

The work on the canal bridges began without undue disturbance from the enemy. He was somewhat suspicious of the whole area, shown by desultory machine gun fire, bursts of which struck near the bridging parties. It was a very dark night and one bridge was completed by 3:30 A.M., and about sixty men of the two regiments were across, when faint dawn and probably noise led to its discovery. (84) About eight enemy machine guns opened up an accurate fire from the base of the west slope of Hill 260, shooting out the bridge almost instantly, and inflicting a few casualties on the men (85) actually crossing. Those across took cover under hedges near the bank and apparently escaped the notice of the gunners for the moment while those on the west bank got good cover under the high canal dyke or bank. (86) As the men who had crossed began to pick up these guns, they opened sniping fire and drew the fire to themselves for the time being. (87) The situation was dangerous for the group across the canal and called for heroic action on the part of somebody. Captain Fisher of Company I, Sixty-First, and Captain Allworth of Company I, 60th, calling on volunteers to follow them, swam the canal, about twenty-five meters wide. (88) Two men were drowned in the attempt to follow, but enough went across that with what were already there, they were able to clean out the closest guns. (89) Then by means of ropes which had been thrown across and the partially repaired bridge, more men came across, those of the 60th attacking Hill 260 and those of the 61st the slope toward Hill 292, clearing a space around the bridge so that it could be fully repaired. (90)

(84)A 1  
Mc 2

(85) A 1  
PK

(86)A 1

(87)A 1

(88)PK Mc 2  
H-5 215

(89)PK A 1

(90)PK Mc 2

The engineers salvaged boats from the bridge that

had never been finished and with them repaired the other  
(91)PK Mc 2 one. (91) Soon after that the rest of the two 3d Battalions  
(92)PK Mc 2 crossed and joined those parts already across. (92) With this  
impetus the attack progressed more rapidly and the foothold  
on the east bank of the Meuse was made secure.

The 2d Battalion of the 61st now crossed the river and  
(93)PK Mc 2 canal, following up the canal behind the 3d. (93) Colonel  
Peyton of the 61st took command of the mixed regiment east  
(94)PK of the Meuse. (94)  
H-5, 219

The 3d Battalion of the 61st pushed on up the south and  
west slopes of Hill 292, assisted by air bursts of shrapnel fire  
(96)PK from the artillery near Clery-le-Grand. At the crest of the (96)  
hill the battalion was stopped by machine gun and artillery  
(97)Mc 2 fire from the other side. (97) Lt. Colonel McClure, commanding,  
made a personal reconnaissance toward the enemy and locating  
machine gun nests and two 77-guns, sent a company around each  
flank. These companies captured a large number of machine guns,  
the two 77's and killed and captured several Boche, driving  
(98)PK Mc 2 the rest toward Milly-devant-Dun. (98)

In the meantime the 2d Battalion had gone on up the river  
past the west side of Hill 292, and took Dun-sur-Meuse about  
(99)PK Mc noon, driving several hundred of the enemy toward Milly. (99)  
3; H-5 Major Stark said that if he had had machine guns he could  
219; H-61 have killed scores from the heights in Dun, but the carry  
P 22 Ch IV across the foot bridges was well nigh impossible for the  
machine gunners.

There were many evidences of the surprise of the Germans  
(100)PK at Dun-sur-Meuse. (100) Valuable personal belongings were  
scattered everywhere. An officers' mess had the food on  
the table ready to sit down to eat, and important maps and  
documents were left behind. The Boche had not intended to

(101)H-5  
201

(102)Lu  
420

leave the east bank of the Meuse. Captured orders read as follows: "The enemy's crossing of the Meuse is to be prevented absolutely. Should he succeed, he is to be thrown back into the Meuse at once. The enemy must not get a foothold on this side of the Meuse under any circumstances." (101) Von Ludendorff's "Own Story" shows that the line of strategic retreat was to come only to the Meuse. (102) Nevertheless it had been crossed.

(103)PK  
Mc 3, H-5  
221

(104)PK

The 2d Battalion reorganized at Dun-sur-Meuse and followed up the enemy across the flats toward Milly-devant-Dun, taking that town. (103) This advance was made under seemingly impassable machine gun fire from the south base of Cote St. Germain, but with little hesitation by the men. It is worthy of record that this was typical of this regiment at this time. (104) Men properly led would advance almost unflinchingly in face of machine gun fire, but would stop for minutes for a couple of shell bursts. This was no doubt due to two things, namely, that they had not had enough experience against machine guns to realize that the funny noises they heard were bullets; and to the fact that so many of their casualties earlier had been from shell fire. It is believed that the first reason is nearest correct, especially as regards the replacements.

(105)H-5  
221

The 3d Battalion spent a busy afternoon in mapping up the area they had taken, and part of the woods on the east base of Hill 292, consolidating their lines on the Milly-devant-Dun--Fountaines road, with a battalion of the 11th Infantry of the 10th Brigade on its right flank extending southward. (105) Part of the 11th had come north that morning after the 10th Brigade completed crossing the canal at Brioules. They had passed by the battalion of the 60th east of Hill 260 in a drive on Dun-sur-Meuse, not knowing that the river had been crossed by the 9th Brigade, and had connected up with the 3d Battalion

the steady dogged advance broke the nerve of the enemy on the southwest end of the hill, and by night the battalion held the hill to the middle of the saddle, joined up on the right with the 60th Infantry near the base of the east slope.

(122)PK  
O H-5, 223

(122)

Company A had moved toward Lion-devant-Dun at the same time the attack on Cote St. Germain started, and after clearing the enemy from the woods southwest of Lion, patrols entered the town, but failed to break through the enemy defenses on the northern edge of town. (123) Soon after these patrols entered, the enemy laid a heavy bombardment on the town which forced the patrols to withdraw to the southern edge and dig in, where the company stayed for the night. (124)

(123)PK O

(124)PK O

The 2d Battalion covered the left flank to the canal for the night, but was still not in liaison with the 90th Division, though several patrols had gone out during the day in attempts to connect up with them. (125) The regiment had met new enemy troops on this day. In addition to prisoners of the 56th Machine Gunners, they got prisoners from a unit of the 20th German Division. (126)

(125)PK E  
181

(126)H-5  
346

During the afternoon of the 6th the enemy avions had been the most active of any day the regiment had ever experienced. (127) They were everywhere, and at such low altitudes in many cases, that one could plainly see the faces of the pilots. They swept troops with machine guns, and threw small hand bombs and hand grenades where troops were seen. Only the fact that troops were well scattered, saved many casualties. The bridge at Dun-sur-Meuse was bombed but not hit. (128) Even so, everybody concerned rested easier when darkness came and these gentlemen headed for home.

(127)PK

(128)PK  
H-5, 233

On the evening of the 6th, the regimental command post



(129)PK moved to Milly-devant-Dun. (129) Soon after dark the combat trains came up with ammunition and what seemed far more  
(130)PK important to the men, hot food. (130) The supply situation had been bad at all times since the 1st, especially as to hot food for front line units, but after troops crossed the river  
(131)PK they had had no hot food until the 6th. (131) The 2d and 3d Battalions went from the night of the 4th on reserve rations, the 3d being fed a hot meal during the day of the 6th, and the 2d getting one that night. The strain was telling, too. Many men had to be evacuated sick on the 6th and 7th, so weak they  
(132)PK could hardly stand. (132) The lack of proper food, the exposure, bad water, and the fatigue of hard fighting had reduced the physical efficiency of many more men to an extremely low point. A company of seventy effective rifles was a large  
(133)PK company. (133) There were two companies in the regiment with no  
(134)PK officers, and no rifle company had more than one. (134) The colonel had, besides the surgeon and the supply officer, one  
(135)PK staff officer. (135) In spite of all this, there was still some  
(136)PK fighting spirit left. (136)

During the night of the 6th patrols were very active, keeping in touch with the enemy and his activities. Thirteen men of Companies B and D got lost in the fog behind the enemy lines on Hill 350 (the north end of Cote St. Germain), and were  
(137)PK captured. (137) The officer with them was wounded in the  
H-61 thigh, but got away and crawled down the hill to Company A's  
p 24, Ch lines by morning. Lines were thinly held and Boche patrols got  
IV behind the line of the 2d Battalion, causing a little nervousness. A patrol of Headquarters Company sent out by the operations officer, captured four prisoners just west of Milly and  
(138)PK drove several of the enemy out of the area. (138)

There was much speculation about this time as to what would happen if the Boche should counterattack.

touch with the enemy. Positions were improved and organized  
(144)PK for defense. (144) Outpost lines were pushed out from one to  
one and one-half kilometers further to the front, keeping con-  
(145)PK tact with the enemy. (145) Units were reorganized and fresh  
supplies of ammunition and reserve rations issued to all troops.  
Five or six officers of the regiment who had been attending  
corps schools joined the regiment this day, and were received  
with great welcome as there were enough of them to give at least  
(146)PK one officer per company. (146)

On the evening of the 8th, the 61st was ordered to go out  
of its sector to the left, along the river, take Chateau  
Chamois and Mouzay, thus covering the crossing of the 90th  
(147)PK Division to the east bank of the Meuse. (147)  
E, 185  
T 360

General Castner commanding the 9th Brigade, ordered two  
companies and a platoon of machine guns to accomplish this  
task, and the job fell to the 3d Battalion, they having had the  
longest rest. Lt. Colonel McClure wanted to send the whole  
battalion, but was voted down, and Companies L and M were  
designated. These two companies and a platoon of Company B,  
14th Machine Gun Battalion under Captain C.E. Martin of Company  
L, passed through Milly about 4:00 A.M., were issued extra  
rations, and given final instructions by the regimental com-  
(148)PK mander. (148) They cleared Lion about daylight, taking up  
advance guard formation with strong flank patrols on either  
side, marching left of the Lion-devant-Dun--Mouzay road to  
(149)PK avoid ambush from Forêt de Woevre, (149) although patrols re-  
ported that wood evacuated on this edge.

The first resistance was struck in Bois-de-Lion where the  
detachment was forced to clean out two machine gun nests, kill-  
(150)PK ing nine and capturing one of the enemy. (150) From there to  
the unimproved road between Chateau Chamois and the canal, they

found the Boche entrenched behind wire entanglements, facing the canal where they expected crossings by the 90th. (151) Caught in flank behind their own wire, most of them ran, going north. (152) The few who did resist were wiped out to the man. Some resistance was met at Chateau Chamols, but was soon ended. A detachment was left at Chateau Chamols and the rest advanced on Mouzay. (153) Sharp resistance was met at Mouzay at first, but the Boche, according to some prisoners captured, thought these troops were the advance guard of at least a brigade, and the battalion holding the town retreated to the north. (154) One German prisoner said, "The Americans are such fools we do not know what they will do next". (155) At least his words contained some truth. At 1:45 P.M. word of the capture of Mouzay was sent back and outpost lines established 500 meters north and east of the village. (156) Thus was the bridgehead for the 90th Division made secure. Prisoners captured had been from the 20th German Division and again from units of 117th German Division, who had been met in the Punch Bowl and Donloen on the 3d. (157)

The action against Mouzay had netted a great gain at very small cost, ten being killed and one wounded, and in addition to the material gain, had liberated about seven hundred French citizens in the town of Mouzay. (158) Companies I and K were sent to Mouzay in the afternoon with rations for the half starved French. (159) There was considerable shelling of the road but they passed without mishap.

With the capture of Mouzay the action under the latest order for the pursuit of the enemy was inaugurated. This order called for the entire 3d Corps to turn eastward and drive hard against the enemy toward Luxembourg and destroy his demoralized army. (160) When the 5th Division had crossed the river and gone so deeply into enemy territory, it had

(161)H-5  
239

relieved the obstacles in front of the French Corps on the right, and these had already closed the gap on the right. (161) Now the 90th Division was to cross the river and attack on the left. The immediate task of the 61st Infantry was to march with advance guard through the Forêt-de-Woevre, deploy on the east side, connect up with the 60th Infantry, which was to go there on the right, and with them take Juvigny, penetrating

(162)  
FO 73,5-D

the plateaus beyond as far as possible. (162) The regiment less the 3d Battalion was to march until 1:00 A.M. November 10th, rest until daylight, and then proceed to the attack. The

(163)PK  
B 187  
(164)PK  
B 187

3d Battalion was to remain in Mouzay until the 90th Division crossed and covered their own bridgehead and then follow the regiment. (163) At the latest they were to leave Mouzay at noon on the 10th, regardless of progress by the 90th. (164)

(165)PK

The regimental command post moved to Chateau Chamois about dark, the 9th. (165) The supporting artillery moved into position in vicinity of Chateau Chamois soon afterward, and about nine P.M. the 1st and 2d Battalions in the order named,

(166)PK

passed into the woods. (166)

The going on this march was extremely hard. There were no roads, as such, through the woods. The map showed a few "pig-paths", but they were almost completely overgrown.

(167)PK  
0

(167) It had been raining and the swampy ground turned into a sea of mud under foot. These troops drew machine gun fire along the northern edge of the woods, delaying the march and at 1:00 P.M. the halt was made about four kilometers

(168)PK  
0

east of Mouzay. (168) At daylight the 1st Battalion found itself off its road to the left, and was caught in flank by machine guns to the north and forced to deploy out of the regimental sector facing north, while a unit of the 2d

(169)PK  
0

Battalion protected its left flank. (169) The 90th Division had crossed the river during the night but had not advanced

(170)PK  
O H-5 245  
E 188

far enough to relieve the pressure on the north. (170)

The 2d Battalion moved on eastward behind the screen of the 1st, and got out-posts along the eastern edge of the woods connecting up with the 60th by night of the 10th. <sup>(171)</sup> The 3d Battalion came from Mouzay on the morning of the 10th and took up position behind the 2d. ~~(171)~~ (172) The 1st Battalion was held by the enemy at almost the same point it had been pinned that morning, due to the slow advance of the 90th through the woods east of Mouzay. (173) Enemy shelling on the 10th was worse than any day spent east of the Meuse, (174) showing that the enemy was not entirely through with war.

The night of the 10th, fresh instructions were added to the previous order issued. The central theme of these instructions was to take Juvigny and go as far as possible, and do it the next morning. (175) This advance started very slowly, but had gained the Remoiville-Baalon road before it was called off. (176) Word of the Armistice was telephoned to the regimental commander at 7:30 A.M., was relayed by telephone to the 3d Battalion and the attack stopped a little past 8:00 A.M. (177) It was none too soon. The previous night had been freezing, and this added to the other hardships had about killed what little physical resistance the troops had. No man had more than one blanket and many of them had none. There is little doubt but that the physical hardships had about overcome the spirit to go forward. (178)

Company E took over the outpost line of the regiment on the afternoon of the 11th, and the balance of the command slept under a roof for the first time since October 4th, for many of them; <sup>but even then</sup> it was only the airplane hangars south of Mouzay. A muster by process of counting noses, held on the 12th, showed the total strength of the regiment at that time to be approximately twelve hundred and fifty. (178a) Official battle casualties are reported as four hundred and one for this period, but the casualties of sickness, just as  
---twenty-four---

get where they wanted it with animals and it took too many men to move it. These guns were returned to their battery on the 6th. (183)

(183)PK

(184)PK  
RE 51

The supporting artillery was not used for barrage firing at any time during this action. (184) It was used to fire on designated targets such as points of special resistance, sensitive points, and retreating enemy troops. The cooperation of the artillery was splendid, even though they were not of the Divisional Artillery. The guns were kept well to the front and there was never a time but that some guns were in firing position except during the time from crossing the Meuse on the 5th until the heavy bridge opened on the 6th. (185)

(185)PK

2. HOWITZER WEAPONS.- The assignment of these weapons within the regiment has been given. Results of their use in this action is almost unknown. The Stokes mortars and 37-mm. gun with the 3d Battalion were used some in the attack on Bois de Babimont, but with unknown results. (186) Because of the difficulty of transportation, the Stokes was not used on the east side of the Meuse. (187) The lack of results obtained with the Stokes may be further due to the fact that the only officer specialist was killed prior to November 1st. (188) The 37-mm. guns were used east of the river, but were not used with their assigned battalions, going more or less on their own. (189) The only known result is that one gun disabled two trucks on the Mouzay--Brandeville road on November 7th. (190)

(186)PK

(187)PK

(188)PK

(189)PK

(190)PK

3. COMMUNICATIONS.- The communications personnel of combined signal corps and infantry soldiers functioned wonderfully well. There was no signal corps officer with the regiment and the only officer specialist had been killed on October 12th, leaving a signal corps sergeant in charge, working under the supervision of the operations officer. (191) These men carried telephone wires forward behind assault battalions on all

(191)PK

occasions and carried the regimental lines forward when the command post moved. The regimental command post was always in communication with higher authority and usually in touch with the assault battalions when they halted a few hours. (192) Two notable achievements were following the 2d Battalion into Milly with a telephone line on the afternoon of November 5th, and carrying a line to Mouzay on the 9th, arriving there about two hours after the capture. (193)

Telephone and runner formed the principal means of communication, no pigeons being furnished and the T.P.S. being impracticable to use because of distances. The radio was a one-way instrument, outgoing only, and was not used except on the occasion of the march through the Forêt-de-Woevre when it was sent with the leading battalion. (194) During this mission on the morning of November 10th the radio instrument and its crew were caught under the machine gun fire directed at that battalion, and the instrument destroyed and the crew of six men all killed. (195)

4. INTELLIGENCE.-- The intelligence section of the regiment also operated without an officer, the only specialist being evacuated sick at the start of the action. (196) These men did good work, however, in questioning prisoners and establishing observation posts, turning in much valuable information. Observation posts were established on Hill 299 west of the Meuse and in Dun-sur-Meuse and on Hill 350 east of the Meuse. (197) The men also accompanied patrols in many cases. (198)

#### ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

The operations of the 61st Infantry that have just been described were highly successful on the part of the Americans, and the enemy demonstrated again here as he had at other times,

elements. Standing on either bank and looking to the other this feat looks well nigh impossible against an enemy of any strength at all, and there were several hundred men in the vicinity of Dun-sur-Meuse as has been shown. The capture of Mouzay against numerically superior forces is another typical case of the same kind. The principle of mass was violated in the regiment on the first day in the attack on Bois-de-Babimont. The 3d Battalion, attacking as a whole, would have insured the capture of this woods. However, this may have aided later action in making commanders realize that the enemy at this time was still strong.

4. ECONOMY OF FORCE.-- The principle of economy of force was usually observed. In almost every case battalions were kept intact when sent on a mission, striking as a unit, and the missions given them were about commensurate with their strength. The outstanding violation was the use of the 1st Battalion on Cote St. Germain and Lion-devant-Dun on the 6th. There is very little doubt but that if Company A had been with the battalion on the hill and let the 2d Battalion take Lion, that both attacks would have been completely successful the first day. It might be said that the attack on Bois de Babimont and on Mouzay were violations of economy of force. The latter worked, however, and for that reason cannot be harshly criticised. Had the enemy put up a determined resistance with the forces he had, these companies would have been squandered with no gain at Mouzay.

5. MOVEMENT.-- The whole operation in this study is one of movement against a more and more defeated enemy. No opportunity to move forward in contact with the enemy was lost, and hence it may be said that this principle of war was continually observed and illustrated.

6. SURPRISE.-- An outstanding violation of the prin-



ple of surprise was the attempted crossing of the Meuse on the afternoon of the 4th. This operation invited failure from its inception. It is true that the enemy did not fire on patrols along the river that day, but this could not be taken at face value, because any sensible enemy would refuse to be baited in such a manner. The great pressure from higher command seems to have led to this take-a-chance action.

Two very fine examples of the compliance with the principle of surprise were the actual crossing of the river the night of November 4th-5th, and the taking of Chateau Chamois and Mouzay. Neither could possibly have succeeded on other terms.

7. SECURITY.-- The principle of security was well complied with by the Americans at all times. Patrols were active daily and nightly, and the regimental commander always had some force available as a reserve. The failure to get in touch with the 90th Division on the left on November 5th and 6th could hardly be called a flat violation, because it was known that they occupied the west bank of the river while our left flank rested on the river, though not in actual contact.

The rear guard action of the Boche was in itself a compliance with this principle, though he violated it when his flank of the forces guarding the river south of Mouzay was surprised and driven in.

8. SIMPLICITY.-- Plans were kept simple and direct within the regiment, and unity of command maintained throughout, thereby complying with simplicity. However, within the brigade it appears that the use of a battalion of each regiment under general command of an officer of one regiment was a violation. On the whole it appears that this could have been carried out more expeditiously by turning the job over

to one regiment. On the other hand there is a question of morale and of competitive spirit between two sister organizations. For example, it is doubtful if either of the two companies would have gone to the river on the afternoon of the 4th if they had not been pitted against each other in grim competition. This spirit was again manifested on the morning of the 5th, in attacking the heights after crossing the river. There is no reason to believe that there was intermingling of the troops of the two units.

(199)PK

9. COOPERATION.-- The spirit of cooperation, hence the complete observance of the principle, was one of the outstanding features of the whole operation. The artillery was always well up and begging for targets except as noted, when it was beyond their powers; not once was a request for fire answered with "We can't get fire on that area". (199) Engineers did their share in the matter of bridges. The regiments cooperated in crossing the river. The 61st Infantry cooperated with the 90th Division in the matter of a bridgehead for the latter. The 2d Battalion cooperated in assisting the 1st by flank protection on the morning of the 10th when the 1st got caught on the left by the enemy north of them.

The communications personnel cooperated most heartily in their maintenance of telephones. Supply units did everything possible in a difficult situation. This spirit went far toward the successes of the regiment as a whole.

#### LESSONS

1. Untrained replacements do not fill the gaps in ranks, and an organization that must be refilled to go into battle should be allowed time at least to orient the replacements they receive.

2. Training in technique of river crossings should be

given all combat troops, with enough actual practice that they know how to make a crossing should the necessity arise.

3. Personal leadership rather than directing alone in those above the platoon or company commanders, is often necessary in combat to get best results.

4. More time in training of combat troops in hygiene and personal care will be time well spent and will save many men with whom to face the enemy when they are most needed.

5. The spiritual or morale element of the human being is far in excess of the physical in overcoming obstacles and hardships.

6. The limits of human endurance are almost unknown if men are led and have the desire to advance.

7. The spirit of vengeance can often be used to further the ends of a commander in battle.

8. Competition between units can be utilized in battle as well as on the drill ground.

9. The accompanying gun from artillery has a little value in combating a rear guard action. It is too cumbersome, not mobile enough, robs the main body of artillery of that many guns and will not usually get much further forward than will its own battery.

10. Determined infantry, almost unaided, can wrest ground from an enemy of lower morale.

11. Artillery barrages are unnecessary in open warfare, concentrations serving the purpose better.

12. Communications by telephone can be kept up down to the battalion under almost any circumstances.

13. Cooperation between arms, between units, and within units, will gain results far beyond the effort expended.